

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant	: Bergman et al.
App. No	: 10/805,766
Filed	: March 22, 2004.
For	: HAND HELD FLOSSING DEVICE
Examiner	: Rachel A Running
Art Unit	: 3732
Conf #	: 1254

**COMMENTS ON THE EXAMINER'S STATEMENT OF
REASONS FOR ALLOWANCE****Mail Stop Issue Fee**

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Dear Sir:

This paper is being filed to comment on the Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance set forth in the Notice of Allowability, which was transmitted on September 19, 2008.

In view of the Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance, Applicants would like to clarify that each of the claims is independently allowable because the prior art does not teach or suggest the recited combination as a whole, and patentability of the claims does not rest on a subset of limitations of the claims. Each claim is allowable because it recites a combination of features that are not taught or suggested by the prior art.

For instance, none of the cited references, taken alone or in combination, teaches a hand-held flossing device, comprising a housing having a handle portion and a head portion, the housing supporting a floss supply comprising a floss, a floss path, a floss advancement mechanism configured to selectively advance floss from the floss supply and through the path,

and a stop mechanism configured to selectively engage at least a portion of the floss to resist advancement of the floss upon actuation of the advancement mechanism so that a tension is imparted to the floss between the stop mechanism and the advancement mechanism, the floss comprising a first surface coating comprising a water soluble material and a second surface coating comprising a generally non-water soluble material, the second coating substantially encapsulating the first coating, as recited in independent Claim 1.

Further, none of the cited references, taken alone or in combination, teaches a hand-held flossing device, comprising a housing having a handle portion and a head portion, a series of ratchet receiver members integrally formed with a wall of the housing, a floss supply comprising a floss, and a floss supply path defined within the housing between the floss supply and a floss exit formed in the head portion, a floss return path defined within the housing between a floss entrance and an advancement mechanism, a wall disposed between the floss supply path and the floss return path in the housing head portion, floss being directed through the floss supply and return paths, the floss exiting through the exit and reentering through the entrance, an exposed floss portion extending between the exit and entrance, wherein the advancement mechanism is configured to selectively advance floss from the supply and through the supply and return paths, and the advancement mechanism comprises a ratcheting member adapted to engage the series of ratcheting receiver members that are integrally formed with the wall of the housing, the ratcheting member being biased outwardly and hinged so that the ratcheting member is moveable over the receiver members only in a first direction and not in a second, generally opposite direction, as recited in independent Claim 3.

Still further, none of the cited references, taken alone or in combination, teaches a hand-held flossing device, comprising a housing having a handle portion, a head portion, and a longitudinal axis, the housing having an outer wall extending circumferentially about the longitudinal axis, a floss supply comprising a floss, a floss supply path defined within the housing between the floss supply and a floss exit formed in the head portion, a floss return path defined within the housing between a floss entrance and an advancement mechanism, the advancement mechanism configured to selectively advance floss from the floss supply and through the supply and return paths, and a stop mechanism interposed between the floss supply and floss exit, the stop mechanism comprising a front stop wall, a rear stop wall, and a stop

member, the stop member selectively movable between a first position and a second position, wherein in the first position the stop member redirects the floss so that the floss is pinched between the front stop wall and the rear stop wall so as to apply a friction force resisting floss movement, and in the second position the stop member allows the floss to move past without restrictive friction, wherein the housing is arranged and configured so that at least one of the front and rear stop walls is part of an enclosed truss structure, the truss structure comprising at least two ribs that extend generally transversely and longitudinally from the corresponding stop wall, and the truss structure being enclosed within the housing outer wall, as recited in independent Claim 28.

Yet further, none of the cited references, taken alone or in combination, teaches a hand-held flossing device, comprising a housing having a handle portion and a head portion, a floss supply comprising a floss, the floss supply disposed in the handle portion, an advancement mechanism supported by the housing and interposed between the floss supply and the head portion, a floss supply path defined within the housing between the floss supply and a floss exit formed in the head portion, a floss return path defined within the housing between a floss entrance and the advancement mechanism, a divider wall disposed between the floss supply path and the floss return path in the housing head portion, wherein the device is configured so that floss is directed from the floss supply through the floss supply path to the exit and reenters through the entrance so that an exposed floss portion extends between the exit and entrance, and wherein floss is further directed along the return path from the entrance to the advancement mechanism, wherein the advancement mechanism comprises an axle rotatably supported by the housing, a wheel that extends radially from the axle and rotates with the axle, and a guard that extends radially from the axle and rotates with the axle, a space being disposed between the wheel and the guard, floss from the return path being wound about the axle in the space between the wheel and the guard so that selective rotation of the wheel selectively advances floss from the floss supply through the supply and return paths and to the advancement mechanism, and wherein the floss supply path is arranged in the housing so as to pass by the advancement mechanism on a side of the guard opposite the wheel so that the guard is interposed between the floss supply path and the return path floss that is wound about the axle, as recited in independent Claim 36.

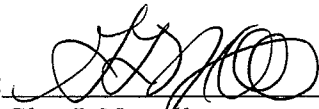
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Please charge any additional fees, including any fees for additional extension of time, or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 11-1410.

Respectfully submitted,

KNOBBE, MARTENS, OLSON & BEAR, LLP

Dated: 11/19/08

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